

Time & Duration of Visit: Tuesday 13 April 2021 10am to 12.30pm

## Virtual Engagement Report

Name of Setting: Cherry Tree House

Name of Manager: Kelly Hopkinson

Insert address: Collum Avenue, Ashby, Scunthorpe, DN16 2TF

Date of visit: 13 April 2021

Date of publication: 22 July 2021

HWNL staff & volunteers involved in the visit: Annabel Tindale, Linda Robinson, Wendy Chester, Denise Fowler, Jackie Rae

## Introduction

The arrival of Covid- 19 in March 2020 meant that strict visiting restrictions were placed on care homes to prevent the spread of infection and ensure the health and safety of both care workers and its residents. As a result of this, visits from relatives and friends were no longer permitted and changes to the way in which other services interacted with staff and residents within the care home environment had to change. There were limited exceptions to this visiting, for example if a resident was at end of life.

Around the same time Healthwatch England instructed all local Healthwatch to cease all Enter and View activity until further notice. This meant that every local Healthwatch in England was no longer able to use their statutory powers of entry, granted under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to be able to understand the experiences of those living and working in residential care.

Although visiting restrictions are slowly being lifted, further guidance from Healthwatch England has advised that enter and view visits should remain on hold until further notice.

We acknowledged that throughout the pandemic, the voices of those who have been most affected by the changes in residential settings had been going largely unheard.

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire remain committed to ensuring the voices of residents are heard and considered in any learning from the pandemic. To do this, each Healthwatch needed to consider the safest and most effective way to engage with care home residents and staff, whilst at the same time minimizing the disruption and burden placed on teams in the care home sector. A virtual engagement model was therefore created and care homes invited to take part.

## Purpose of the virtual engagement

The purpose of the virtual engagement in care homes is an attempt to;

- Capture the general experiences of residents living in care homes, including how the home meets their needs; what is positive about living in the care home and where the care and services offered by the homes could have improved.
- Capture the experiences of residents who have needed to access any specific care during Covid 19.
- Understand the impact and needs of residents resulting from reduced contact with family members during Covid 19.
- Liaise with family members to find out their experiences of their relative or friend living in a care home and reduced contact with their loved ones in care homes.

- Understand the impact of the Manager and staff of the Care Home and the impact of the restrictions imposed.

By engaging effectively with all the above groups, we aim to identify areas of concern, examples of good practice and any other system wide issues that may have come to light during the pandemic. We also understand the limitations of a virtual visits as it is not the same as face to face engagement. All observations are made to the best of our ability via a zoom virtual tour, backed up with questionnaires for staff, residents and relatives.

## Summary of Key Findings

- Improvements have been made in line with the CQC recommendations.
- Healthwatch staff and volunteers observed good leadership and management.
- Staff were all up to date with vaccines, Covid policies and procedures.
- Staff told us they enjoy working at the home and they feel confident that they can raise any concerns with management.
- PPE, Covid testing and infection control measures were all in place at the care home.
- Residents looked happy and were pleased with the level of care they received.
- Residents enjoyed the food and activities on offer and had kept in regular contact with family and loved ones throughout the pandemic.
- Residents told us they were happy that their relatives and loved ones could now visit them and they felt safe with the all the hygiene measures in place.
- Overall the care home and grounds looked clean, tidy and inviting to residents.

## Cherry Tree House Summary

Cherry Tree House is a 34 bed residential care home in Ashby, Scunthorpe. At the time of the engagement there were 12 residents living at Cherry Tree House. There was one full time member of care staff and 14 part-time care assistants. Staff had been at the home a number of years, so the turnover is low.

The current manager is temporarily in post 1 to 2 days a week to implement improvements to the care home since the latest CQC visit. The deputy manager is taking on more responsibilities.

## Manager's feedback

A Healthwatch staff member provided the manager with a questionnaire and followed this up with an interview over zoom. The following topics were discussed:

### Latest CQC report

Since the CQC visit in October 2020 and the 'requires improvement' rating, the following improvements have been made:

- Employed a new cook, which has improved the food choices for residents and a hot meal option at lunch and tea time. Feedback from a resident's survey confirmed they had more food options available to them and better meals. Kitchen has new appliances and crockery/ utensils.
- A new washing machine and laundry items have been purchased. Laundry is carried out by the night care staff at the minute, but this isn't sustainable going forward if the care home capacity increases. Extra staff would be recruited specifically for this role if the number of residents significantly increased.
- New furniture, flooring, wash basins and pedal bins have been installed throughout the home, to ensure better safety and infection control measures.
- Staff and the deputy manager need up to date training in infection control and at the time of the virtual visit, the manager was looking into external training for this.
- New care plans and risk assessments were written for all residents. Residents and their family were involved in updating their individual care plan.

### Covid -19 & safety

The care home manager shared what policies and procedures are in place to keep residents and staff safe during the pandemic.

- A full risk assessment and covid-19 policy is in place.
- Covid restrictions are verbally communicated with residents as most have the capacity to understand the impact of the pandemic. Residents were told at the start of the pandemic that visiting would be put on hold and staff would be wearing PPE at all times.

- Staff are daily verbally communicated of any Covid updates and also updated through the staff communication book (staff chose to have this book in place as they all like this method of communication).
- Relatives are kept informed of any changes via letter and also over the telephone on a daily/ weekly basis as necessary.
- Relatives know the manager is always at the care home on a Tuesday if they need to speak to her.
- Visiting was placed on hold during the pandemic, but once government guidelines allowed, visiting resumed with safety measures in place such as a designated visitor area, lateral flow testing, increased PPE and handwashing for visitors.
- At the time of the virtual visit, 10 Covid cases had been recorded amongst staff over the last 12 months and 10 cases of Covid had been recorded in residents (one outbreak). All had very few symptoms, no treatment or hospitalisation was required.
- Staff followed self-isolating procedures and residents self-isolated in their rooms for the required period.
- At the time of virtual visit all staff and residents had received two Covid vaccines and staff carried out a Covid test weekly and residents every 28 days. No more Covid cases have been reported at the home.

### Resident's health and wellbeing

- The manager told us that during the pandemic residents had said how they missed seeing their family and links with the local community. To reduce isolation, staff have supported residents to speak to their families over the telephone and see their families via Zoom or other video platforms.
- Window visits, letter writing, phone calls and video calls have all been encouraged to keep in touch with families, whatever format suits the resident best.
- Residents can have one visitor at a scheduled time each week, in a designated visitor room and this has so far been successful and residents are happy visiting can resume.
- As there are a small number of residents in the home, activities have been resident led, where each day they are asked what they would like to do in the afternoon and they can choose a variety of activities.
- The home has a secure garden which residents can use.

- Residents have access to the usual external healthcare services such as district nurses and their GP through the single point of access and the podiatry service has attended the care home when needed.
- Residents are kept up to date with any changes daily and if they do not have capacity their next of kin is kept up to date of any changes.

## Staff feedback

10 staff completed questionnaires about working in the care home. Here is a summary of their feedback:

- Staff retention is good, some staff were new to the role, but many had been there 4, 8, 15 years plus. One person has worked there over 30 years.
- All staff commented that they enjoyed the job and were happy working at Cherry Tree, comments included:

*“Cherry Tree has always been a caring, friendly home for residents and staff – that’s why I’m still here.”*

*“Very proud.”*

*“Things have been difficult during Covid, However, I feel the whole team have pulled together.”*

- Staff said they were informed of any updates in several ways; directly from the manager or senior care staff, through notices in the staff room and the communication book.
- All staff said they felt confident to raise any concerns with their supervisor or manager of the care home at any time.
- Staff confirmed they are tested weekly for Covid and that they feel safe with all the correct PPE and procedures in place.
- Staff confirmed masks and PPE are worn at all times, hand sanitisers, hand washing, social distancing where possible and other procedures are in place to keep everyone safe.
- All staff felt they had sufficient training to carry out their role, including in infection control.

## Resident and relative feedback

Only two residents came forward to offer feedback through a questionnaire. Here's what they had to say:

- Both residents had lived at Cherry Tree House for over a year and said they felt safe and secure living at the care home.
- Both were happy, one person said they do get down days, but not because they don't like living at the care home, just they get low in mood from time to time.
- Both residents said the staff were "lovely" and "very nice and cooperative."
- Both residents felt confident they would raise any concerns with Kelly (the Manager) or Jo (the Deputy Manager).
- Residents were not worried about getting Covid and said they are regularly tested for Covid.
- Residents had kept in touch with family through window visits, calls on their mobiles and recently through face to face visits that they thoroughly enjoyed.
- One resident said they sometimes felt lonely and that it is "part of getting old."
- Both residents joined in activities of their choice such as puzzles, dominoes, jigsaws and enjoyed sitting in the gardens.
- Residents both enjoyed the food and said it was "lovely" with a choice of meals. One resident told us she had gained a stone in weight since moving to Cherry Tree.
- One resident told us she loves her bedroom and that Cherry Tree was her first choice when she needed to go into a care home.

## Observations during the virtual tour

One Healthwatch staff member and four Healthwatch volunteers took part in a virtual tour of the care home via zoom. There are limitations of this method of engagement, but the following observations were made:

- All staff were observed wearing a uniform and face masks.
- Hand sanitiser was observed by some of the volunteers at locations around the home
- All fixtures and fittings were in good condition, a lot of the furniture was new and the home was newly decorated. No clutter around the home.

- The manager confirmed all cleaning cupboards and laundry areas were kept locked when not in use and accessed via a keypad.
- Volunteers observed that residents looked happy from what they could see with the limitations of the technology, there wasn't much interaction with residents, but this is only a snapshot in time and could be the time of day as it was nearly lunchtime. Residents who filled in the questionnaire confirmed their care needs were met and that they took part in regular activities.
- Volunteers wondered if a better seating plan for residents would allow more interaction between them, rather than them being in a circle (unless residents choose to sit in a circle).
- There was an uncoiled hosepipe in the garden that could be a potential trip hazard. The manager confirmed she would get that sorted ASAP.
- A volunteer said they saw a trailing television wire.
- Appropriate cleaning/ warning signs e.g. wet floor etc. appeared to be in place when cleaning was taking place.
- Food menu – most volunteers said the food menu reflected a choice of hot and cold meals, but it was highlighted there wasn't much vegetarian choice and dietary requirements such as soft food options were not reflected in the menu (although they may be catered for).
- The manager gave us a tour of the upstairs of the care home that they are hoping to open to dementia patients in the future. The area was bright and had a number of themed areas around farms and animals.
- The manager confirmed all residents could bring personal items and furniture of their choice to personalise their bedrooms if they wanted to.
- Whilst on the tour the manager told us about a Scunthorpe United themed birthday party they had held for a resident which resulted in the manager and team sending the resident a card. She said they try to cater for all residents' special occasions.
- Volunteers observed that there were adequate security measures in place such as key codes on doors to staff only areas and secure stair gates to keep residents safe.
- Volunteers observed the dining room to be clean, tidy and that residents had their own individual placemats.



## Recommendations

- Ensure any loose hoses and cables both inside and outside the building are stored correctly to avoid any slip, trip or fall hazards.
- Consider adding more vegetarian options to the food menu.
- Ensure all staff have up to date hygiene and infection control training.

## Conclusion

Overall, the feedback we received from the manager, staff and residents at Cherry Tree House was positive. Healthwatch staff and volunteers observed that the manager and staff had worked hard to make improvements in line with the CQC recommendations and that there are policies and procedures in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19. From the feedback gathered, it appears activities and food choices are person centered and residents are included in decisions about their care. With these changes in mind, the home looks to recruit more residents and has plans in place to be able to support an increase in people living at the care home. Healthwatch would like to thank Kelly (the manager) and all the staff and residents to their contribution to the virtual visit and wish them all the best for the future.

Signed on behalf of Healthwatch North Lincolnshire: A.Tindale	Date: 20/07/2021
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## Recommendations & monitoring

Healthwatch will monitor the recommendations made in this report. To support you with these, please fill in the SMART goals below and return to Healthwatch.

Specific	What is the recommendation?
	Ensure any loose hosepipes and cables both inside and outside the building are stored correctly to avoid any slip, trip or fall hazards.
Measurable	How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met the recommendation?
	The hose pipe was moved immediately and a health and safety audit was undertaken to ensure all loose cables were moved to a safe position.
Achievable	Is the recommendation achievable? Do you have the skills to achieve it?
	Yes, completed and will continue to monitor through H&S audits and daily walk rounds
Relevant	Is the recommendation relevant?
	Yes, potential trip hazard
Time-Bound	When will the recommendation be achieved?
	Completed
Smart Goal	Using the above SMART steps, write a summary of the recommendation and how it will be achieved or new SMART goal
	To continue to undertake daily walk rounds and bi monthly H&S audits

Specific	What is the recommendation?
	Consider adding more vegetarian options to the food menu.
Measurable	How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met the recommendation?
	Residents are offered two choices every meal time, there is always a meat option and a vegetable option available
Achievable	Is the recommendation achievable? Do you have the skills to achieve it?
	Yes already in place
Relevant	Is the recommendation relevant?
	Yes to ensure residents choices are respected
Time-Bound	When will the recommendation be achieved?
	Completed there has always been two options
Smart Goal	Using the above SMART steps, write a summary of the recommendation and how it will be achieved or new SMART goal
	To continue to offer two options each day

Specific	What is the recommendation?
	Ensure all staff have up to date hygiene and infection control training.
Measurable	How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met the recommendation?
	Completed all staff undertook this at the end of April 2021
Achievable	Is the recommendation achievable? Do you have the skills to achieve it?
	Already completed
Relevant	Is the recommendation relevant?
	Yes
Time-Bound	When will the recommendation be achieved?
	Completed April 2021
Smart Goal	Using the above SMART steps, write a summary of the recommendation and how it will be achieved or new SMART goal
	Continue to ensure mandatory training is completed in a timely manner

Signed on behalf of Cherry Tree House: Kelly Hopkinson	Date: 21/7/21
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